DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 395 721 PS 024 394

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TITLE	Extended-Day Programs in Elementary and Combined Schools. Issue Brief.
INSTITUTION	American Inst. for Research, Washington, DC. Washington Research Center.
SPONS AGENCY	National Center for Education Statistics (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	IB-5-96; NCES-96-843
PUB DATE	Apr 96
NOTE	3p.; Based on "1990-91 Schools and Staffing Survey," see ED 359 225.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Statistical Data (110)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	After School Programs; Ancillary School Services; Economic Factors; Elementary Education; *Elementary Schools; Employed Parents; *Extended School Day; Latchkey Children; *School Age Day Care
IDENTIFIERS	*Availability (Programs and Services); Child Care Needs

ABSTRACT

Extended-day education programs may serve a variety of purposes for children and their parents, from providing a safe recreation environment to academic enrichment, but the most often-cited purpose of these programs is providing adult supervision of children. The increased labor force participation of mothers with young children--married or single--is expected to affect the need for out-of-home care for school age children. Data from the 1987-88 and 1990-91 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)--conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics to collect information on school programs--were examined to determine the percentages of both elementary and combined schools (schools that include grades higher than eighth and lower than seventh) that reported having extended-day programs and the corresponding percentages of students participating in them. Results indicated that from 1987-88 to 1990-91: (1) the percentage of schools offering extended-day programs increased, and in both years, these programs were found more often in private schools than in public schools; (2) rural schools reported less availability of extended-day programs than urban schools; (3) extended-day programs were more available and had higher participation rates in public and private schools where 50 percent or more of the students enrolled were minorities than in schools where fewer than 20 percent of the enrolled students were minorities. Additional analyses of SASS data are needed to determine the effect of school size on provision of extended-day programs, and the availability of such programs in schools serving large percentages of students from low-income families. Research beyond SASS data is needed to determine whether extended-day programs improve school performance, and whether such programs are adequate to meet the needs of single-parent dual-working-parent families. (HTH)

ED 395 721

ISSUE BRIEF

Extended-Day Programs in Elementary and Combined Schools

APRIL 1996
IB–5–96

Extended-day programs may serve a variety of purposes for children and their parents, from providing a safe recreation environment to academic enrichment, but the most often-cited purpose of these programs is providing adult supervision of children (Seppanen, deVries, and Seligson 1993). The increased labor force participation of mothers with young children (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1994) and the increased numbers of single-parent families (Center for the Study of Social Policy 1993) might be expected to impact needs for child care outside the home for school-aged children. In 1991, 1.6 million children aged 5–14 years old (i.e., about 7.6 percent of the population in this age range) were estimated to be in self-care or unsupervised by an adult for at least part of the time their mothers worked (Casper, Hawkins, and O'Connell 1994).

Evidence that a number of children are being left to care for themselves raises important questions about the availability and extent of participation in before- or after-school child-care programs. Has the availability of these programs increased over time? How does program availability and participation vary by school sector and geographic location? Data available from the 1987–88 and 1990–91 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), can be used to address these sorts of questions about school-based extended-day programs. This brief examines the percentages of elementary and combined schools that reported having extended-day programs in these years and the corresponding percentages of students participating in them. (A combined school includes grades higher than the eighth and lower than the seventh.)

From 1987–88 to 1990–91, the percentage of schools offering extended-day programs increased; in both years, these programs were more often found in private schools than in public schools.

In both 1987–88 and 1990–91, fewer than half of all elementary and combined schools had extended-day programs, but the percentage of both public and private schools offering extended-day programs increased during this period (table 1). In both of these years, a higher proportion of private schools had extended-day programs than did public schools. In 1990–91, for example, about 25 percent of public schools offered these programs, compared to approximately 43 percent of private schools. Similarly, in 1990–91, the percentage of students participating in these programs was higher in private schools than in public schools.

Table 1. Percentage of public and private elementary and combined schools reporting available extended-day programs, and percentages of students participating in these programs, overall and by urbanicity: 1987–88 and 1990–91

	Percent of schools with programs available		Percent of students participating*
	1987–88	1990–91	1990–91
Public	15.5	25.2	10.3
Central city	25.2	36.0	11.7
Urban fringe	21.4	34.4	9.8
Rural	6.7	14.7	8.7
Private	33.2	42.5	17.9
Central city	44.5	58.5	18.1
Urban fringe	37.2	47.4	17.4
Rural	17.4	23.1	18.4

* Calculated only for those schools reporting program availability

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1987–88 and 1990–91 Schools and Staffing Surveys (School Questionnaire).

Rural schools less frequently reported the availability of extended-day programs than did urban schools.

On average, the percentages of public and private rural schools reporting available extended-day programs in 1987–88 and 1990–91 were less than half of the percentages of central city and urban fringe schools. Among public schools in 1987–88, about 25 percent of schools in central city locations offered these programs, compared to approximately 7 percent in rural areas; in 1990–91, these percentages were 36 percent and about 15 percent, respectively (table 1). However, among both public and private schools that had extended-day programs in 1990–91,

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no significant differences were found between central city and urban fringe schools and rural schools in the percentages of students who participated in such programs.

In both 1987–88 and 1990–91, extended-day programs were more available and had higher participation rates in public and private schools where 50 percent or more of the students enrolled were minorities than in schools where fewer than 20 percent of the enrolled students were minorities.

In public schools in 1990–91, approximately 32 percent of high-minority schools (i.e., schools with 50 percent or more minority students) offered extended-day programs, while about 22 percent of low-minority schools (i.e., schools with fewer than 20 percent minority students) offered such programs (table 2). Similarly, in 1990–91 greater percentages of high-minority private schools offered extended-day programs than did low-minority private schools—about 57 percent and about 36 percent, respectively. In addition, among both public and private schools in 1990–91, the percentages of students participating in extended-day programs were higher in high-minority schools than in low-minority schools. For example, about 21 percent of the students in high-minority private schools participated in these programs, compared to about 16 percent of the students in low-minority private schools.

Table 2. Percentage of public and private elementary and combined schools with varying levels of minority enrollment reporting available extended-day programs, and percentages of students participating in these programs: 1987–88 and 1990–91

	Percent of schools with programs available		Percent of students participating*
	1987–88	1990–91	1990–91
Public			
Low minority (<20%)	12.6	22.3	8.8
Medium minority (20-49%)	17.0	25.7	10.0
High minority (≥50%)	22.6	32.2	12.5
Private			
Low minority (<20%)	28.1	35.7	16.1
Medium minority (20-49%)	47.3	59.0	20.3
High minority (≥50%)	48.3	56.5	21.3

* Calculated only for those schools reporting program availability

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1987–88 and 1990–91 Schools and Staffing Surveys (School Questionnaire).

Discussion

These data clearly show that there were more extended-day programs available in schools in 1990–91 than there were in 1987–88. These programs continued to be more available in private than public schools, in urban than rural schools, and in medium-to-high minority than low-minority schools. These findings also raise other research questions. For example, does extended-day program provision also vary by the size of the school? Are the patterns of program provision similar for schools serving different minority subgroups (e.g., for Hispanic versus Asian students)? What about the availability of extended-day programs in schools serving large percentages of students from low-income families? Further analyses of the SASS data can provide answers to these questions. In fact, the recent availability of SASS data for 1993–94 makes possible the examination of these issues over three time points. Other related questions that reach beyond the SASS data include whether the provision of extended-day programs leads to improved school performance for participants, and whether the availability of extended-day and other types of child-care programs is adequate to meet the needs of single-parent and dual-working-parent families.

References and Related Publications

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Issue Briefs present information on education topics of current interest. All estimates shown are based on samples and are subject to sampling variability. All differences are statistically significant at the .05 level. In the design, conduct, and data processing of NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors, such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error. For additional details on SASS data collection methods and definitions, see the following U.S. Department of Education publications: *Schools and Staffing Survey: Sample Design and Estimation* (NCES Report Nos. 91–127 and 93–449) and *Quality Profile for SASS: Aspects of the Quality of Data in the Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS)* (NCES Report No. 94–340).

This **Issue Brief** was prepared by Robert Rossi, Shannon Daugherty, and Pamela Vergun, American Institutes for Research. To obtain standard errors or definitions of terms for this **Issue Brief**, or to obtain additional information about the Schools and Staffing Survey, contact Charles H. Hammer (202) 219–1330. To order additional copies of this **Issue Brief** or other NCES publications, call 1–800–424–1616.

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